

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 090982  
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DRAFTED BY: ARA/CCA:DEHENDERSON

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 090982

FOL GABORONE 0872 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO CAPETOWN DARESSALAAM  
LUSAKA MAPUTO MOSCOW PEKING PRETORIA USUN MAR 29 1978 REPEATED  
TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0872

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV RH SF BC CH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: PRC AMBASSADOR EXPRESSES FEAR OF CUBAN  
INTERVENTION

1. AT A SOCIAL FUNCTION MARCH 24, PRC AMBASSADOR CHAO  
CHENG-YI PULLED DCM ASIDE TO ASK HIM ABOUT DARESSALAAM  
FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS' CONFERENCE WHICH HAD JUST BEEN ANNOUNCED  
FOR MARCH 25-26. HE SAID HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT SOMETHING  
POSITIVE WOULD COME FROM IT, THAT TIME WAS RUNNING OUT AND  
THAT "SOMETHING MUST BE DONE SOON OR OTHER FORCES WILL  
INTERVENE". HE HAD HEARD THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD ALSO  
BE IN DAR, AND URGED USG TO SEE TO IT THAT THE MEETING  
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PAGE 02 STATE 090982

PRODUCED RESULTS. "YOU CAN DO IT", HE SAID,  
"YOU HAVE THE POWER." (IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE  
MEANT TO GET SMITH OR PF TO BE FLEXIBLE; PROBABLY HE  
MEANT BOTH.)

2. DURING CONGRESSMAN SOLARZ' MARCH 27 TRIP TO  
GABORONE, THE CONGRESSMAN HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK

WITH AMBASSADOR CHAO AT THE AIRPORT DEPARTURE LOUNGE. HE ASKED HIM INTER ALIA WHAT PRC ATTITUDE WOULD BE IN THE EVENT OF CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN RHODESIA. CHAO ASKED IF THAT WERE VERY LIKELY TO HAPPEN, TO WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN REPLIED "NOT VERY LIKELY, BUT POSSIBLE". VISIBLY REASSURED, CHAO SAID HE CERTAINLY HOPED IT WOULD NOT OCCUR, AS CUBAN INTERVENTION WOULD VASTLY COMPLICATE AN ALREADY COMPLEX SITUATION. CHAO ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED THE FRONT LINE STATES WOULD NOT WANT CUBAN TROOPS IN RHODESIA AND WOULD OPPOSE ANY SUCH MOVE.

3. COMMENT. THE ABOVE EXPRESSION OF OPTIMISM (OR WISHFUL THINKING) MAY BE AN ERROR OF JUDGMENT BY CHAO, IN LIGHT OF EXTAFF MIN MOGWE'S REMARK EARLIER THAT DAY TO EFFECT THAT GOB WOULD NOT OPPOSE CUBAN INTERVENTION IF SOUTH AFRICA WENT INTO RHODESIA OR IF IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO BRING DOWN THE SALISBURY (I.E., SMITH) REGIME. NORLAND UNQUOTE VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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